



Media Release

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Sheridan woman chosen as Consumer of the Year for DHS Blind Services Division

Nancy Turley, of Sheridan, has been named as first annual Consumer of the Year by Arkansas Department of Human Services Division of Services for the Blind (DSB). She was chosen from among eight clients nominated by DSB counselors who regularly work with them.

Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Mary Douglas nominated Turley because she “has demonstrated commitment to improving her ability to use her remaining vision to lead an active lifestyle to remain self-sufficient, contribute to the family economics, and sustain an interest in life and others during her age of self-renewal.”

Turley has congenital nystagmus and damage to her retinas due to toxoplasmosis, a parasitic disease. Her vision has been declining gradually since being diagnosed about 48 years ago. Nystagmus is an eye condition characterized by alternating slow movements in one direction and quick movements in the other direction. These involuntary movements of the eyes may reduce vision or be associated with other more serious conditions that limit vision.

“Nancy doesn’t give up. She just keeps on trying to do her work, even if she has to adapt,” says her husband Johnny Turley. Her father Edgar White says, “Nancy is methodical in getting her work done. She makes a list of things to accomplish and sets her mind to do so.”

Her daughter Rebecca Clark agreed, saying, “Mama has not become discouraged with her low vision. She still keeps a cheerful attitude even though she becomes frustrated at times.”

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“Nancy is a very good cook and loves to find new recipes to try. She downloads recipes to her recipe database and has figured out how to print them in a large format,” her sister Mary Peterson said.

Douglas says Turley has persevered to complete a B.A. in accounting and has had excellent experience in the business sector as a bookkeeper, in the community as a substitute teacher, and in the home as a parent. In her current job at Arkansas State Teacher Retirement, she presents a professional image, promotes teamwork, and enjoys problem-solving.

Turley is determined to succeed and has learned to use ZoomText low vision software, hand-held magnifiers, bioptic eyeglasses, and other adaptive equipment; has rearranged her office to maximize the use of electric and natural light; and keeps current in her profession through employee trainings at work, Douglas said. Turley is a good self-advocate and has encouraged her employer to set up a system for requesting and obtaining Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accommodations.

Turley is more than a number to DSB; she’s a success and an inspiration. DSB is privileged to recognize her for a job well done and trusts that success will continue to follow this deserving individual, who has demonstrated that with determination, blindness is not a barrier to competitive employment. Hundreds of Arkansans with a disability return to work each year after receiving vocational rehabilitation services.

DSB provides vocational rehabilitation services to individuals who are blind or severely visually impaired and whose goal is successful employment. DSB also serves youth and older blind individuals. People wanting information about DSB’s programs and services can call 1-800-960-9270 or 501-682-5463 or visit the DSB website at <http://www.arkansas.gov/dhs/dsb/NEWDsb/index.htm>.

